

Unit Project: Students Involved in the Community

Meaningful civic participation is one of the goals of the Fairfax County Program of Studies for eighth graders. Community service learning projects help to foster a sense of civic responsibility in young citizens and should be actively promoted in the classroom. The attached documents and letters are suggestions that can be adapted for use in your classroom. Several of them have been adapted from the 8th grade Program of Studies binder.

Connection to POS: Standards 8.1

- ◆ *Students will address the needs of the community through participation in a service learning project (8.1.1.c.)*

SOL Standards: 7.2.c, 7.7.a



Objectives

At the end of this project, students will be able to:

- ◆ understand community needs, how the needs are met by the government and non-profit sectors, and how they – as individual citizens – can participate in the process.
- ◆ provide community agencies and programs with additional volunteer resources.
- ◆ nurture the spirit of volunteerism in young people.



Materials

- ◆ The Directory of Youth Service Learning Opportunities. This document can be accessed online at <http://www.btg.com/volsrus>
- ◆ Chart of hours to record ongoing participation in community service learning project
- ◆ Suggestions for implementation through the civics classroom
- ◆ Sample parent letter



Time Needed

- ◆ A year-long project that can be divided into quarters for reporting/assessment purposes



Procedures

1. Early in the year, discuss service learning opportunities with students. Emphasize the importance of being involved in their community. Discuss such questions as: What is meant by civic life? What responsibilities do individuals have toward society? What, if any, conflicts exist between civic and personal responsibility? If possible, work with the appropriate personnel at your school to combine these efforts with any existing character education programs that may already be in place at your school.
2. Review the Directory of Youth Service Learning Opportunities with students. It is available on-line or by calling the center at (703)246-3460. Encourage students to pick something that interests them or may already match a talent or hobby they have. Be careful to point out that many of these organizations rely on volunteers a great deal and may require a minimum number of service hours over the course of a month/quarter/year.
3. Distribute parent permission letters.
4. Distribute the hours log to be used in recording service hours.
5. Review all handouts and clarify administrative details such as due dates, student responsibilities, etc. Distribute reflective activities and review questions with students. Again review expectations for completing this part of assignment.
6. Arrange dates/times toward the end of the quarter/year that students can give brief oral presentations on their community service learning experiences.



Assessment

- ◆ Journal/portfolio entries
- ◆ Reflective follow-up activity (sample enclosed)
- ◆ Oral presentations



Differentiations

- ◆ Provide an alternative assignment for students who may be unable or unwilling to participate in a community service learning project. Such students could do research on local charitable organizations or on key figures who have worked to promote important causes such as world peace, human rights concerns, homelessness, etc.



Interdisciplinary Connections

- ◆ Ask the teachers on your team to provide a list of suggested activities that each student could participate in that is closely related to their studies in science, math, and English.